The History Center at Courthouse Square

The DOCKET

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Director's Comments

Dear Friends,

Summer is in full swing here at the History Center! We had a superb time in South Dakota and it was difficult to say goodbye and come back to a routine!

Thursdays at Courthouse Square has begun and we have enjoyed three excellent programs; first from Ron Taylor about Sister Mary Purnell, followed by Loreen Niewenhuis about her experiences on Isle Royale, and the third program was on July 11, from Chris Jager. This week Dr. Greg Sumner returns to share the program "Michigan POW Camps in WWII" held in the Berrien Springs Community Library.

Underwritten by the Starks Family Funeral Homes and Cremation Services and the Heritage Chapel, the Village of Berrien Springs, Berrien Springs Community Library, and the History Center at Courthouse Square partnered to bring a full day of events celebrating our Nation's Birthday. We had elected politicians, musicians, food vendors, story tellers, politicians, ice cream, children's activities, blacksmiths, first-person interpretations, and more! We had nearly 1,000 people join us for the day and we are already planning for the next one! I want to especially thank our volunteers who helped greet, serve, and lead activities during the day - we could not have done it without you.

I invite you to spend time with us at the Berrien County Youth Fair. Every year we have a booth in one of the commercial buildings and rely on volunteers to help "man (or woman!) the booth". This will come with a pass to enter the fair--getting you closer to elephant ears and circus shenanigans! If you are interested in giving your time during fair week, give us a call (269-471-1202.

With mixed emotions I would like to announce that Kelsey Curnutt, our Museum Services Coordinator, will be joining the team at the Howard Performing Arts Center at Andrews University as the Assistant Manager. Her last day will be July 25.

While July is technically my last month, I have been asked to stay on to help with the transition between old and new staff. There has not been a new Executive Director selected as of yet, but I know the right person will come along. I have enjoyed becoming acquainted with each of you whether it has been during one of our motorcoach tours, our Thursdays at Courthouse Square programs, or as a drop-in visitor. Thank you for making my time here memorable. On behalf of our staff and board, I want to thank you, once again, for your generous support, whether it has been through monetary gifts or your gift of time, without you we would cease to exist.

Thank you all.

Sincerely,
Kathy A. Cyr

Executive Director

Southwest Michigan was once the Hotspot for Quick Weddings

Early last week a phone call came into the museum from a woman with a question. This happens often enough and one can never know what the question will be (once it was a man who found a tombstone in his outdoor shed and wanted to know if I knew whether the cemetery was missing this particular item!). With pen poised and ready to take notes, I asked the caller to go ahead with her question and I will strive to respond with what I knew or work on finding the answer.

"Was Berrien County known as a place for quick marriages?" she asked. She continued to explain that she was writing an article on her family and in her research she found that two relatives who lived in Wisconsin, with no connection to Berrien County, made a trip to St. Joseph, got married, and returned to Wisconsin all within what must have been a whirlwind of a weekend. "Was this common? Was it because they read the writing on the wall knew the United States was soon to enter the War in Europe?" the caller pondered.

I have often heard of soldiers getting married quickly before shipping off, but had not heard of our beloved county being a destination wedding location. Aside from our picturesque lake shore and the plethora of farms, what would draw someone here to be wedded? Not knowing the answer, I put in a quick email to Bob Myers, the one who knows all things about Berrien County History. I did not have to wait long for a response:

"Yup, it's true! About 1905 or so, Indiana and Illinois instituted a waiting period of (I think) 3 days between the time a couple filed an application for a marriage license and when they could get married. The number of marriages in Berrien County just about tripled overnight from about 500 a year to 1,500. People from Chicago, especially, would take the Lake Michigan passenger steamers to St. Joseph, go up to the courthouse, get married, and head home. It was a real racket, because clergy and justices of the peace collected a nice fee for performing the ceremony."

Well, there we have it!

** The photograph accompanying the above story is taken from the BCHA archives. It shows John and Anna Lord posing for their wedding portrait. The 1917 Farm Journal Rural Directory of Berrien County lists John S. and Anna M. Lord as the owners of 79 acres in Oronoko Township near Baroda.*

From the Collection:
Fourth of July Celebrations of the Past

We are still flying high off our Old Fashion 4th of July Celebration and wanted to take a look back to see how we as a community have celebrated in years past. Below are photographs that show people gathered together celebrating our nation from the 1870s up to the 1970s. Take a look!

Photograph of stores on Ferry Street in Berrien Springs with many flags displayed, perhaps for the 4th of July, dated 1873.

Portrait of a group of young people seated outdoors. People are from the Watervliet area. Note the boy in the upper left corner. People are identified as, back row, left to right: John Ott, Sara Becht, Rose Gray, Frank Becht. Front row, left to right: Will Hilliard, Lena Merrifield, Alice Harper. Dated 4 July 1892.

Photograph of a picnic, identified on the back of the mounting card as "Saturday, July 4th, 1896; Indian Fields, Berrien Springs, Michigan." The "Indian Fields" was also known as Grove Park.

Photograph of a group of people posed on a decorated wagon at Hollywood, Michigan, ca. 1900. Photo came from the home of a nurseryman who lived near Derby and Hollywood. The home was first owned by Herbert Brown and Carrie M. Dunham Brown. Identity of the people on the wagon, and the occasion for which the photo was taken, is unknown though the patriotic decorations on the wagon suggests Decoration Day or the

4th of July; the coats and heavy clothing worn by people in the picture indicates an earlier time of the year, probably Decoration Day

Portrait of the Buchanan Band, band members posed with their instruments on a street in front of a house, dated 4 July 1910. According to the donor, the photo was taken in front of a house at 205 Days Avenue. Band members are identified as, left to right: Earl Stowe; Harry Titsort; Fred Mead; Ed Badger; Pete Fuller; Gene Hallock; Alvin Willis; Billy Wood; Phay Graffort; Charles Simpson (with drum); M. Palmiter; John Barnhart; Ed Pascoe; John Morris (manager, wearing straw hat); Art Ranft; Glenn Smith; Clem Conrad; Billy Knott; George Esby.

Photograph of a large model of the 1839 Berrien County courthouse on a trailer, being pulled along

Main Street in Berrien Springs by an automobile during the 1971 4th of July parade. People in the photograph are identified as Clinton Wall (on the float), Edgar Kesterke (on the back of the car in front), Elaine Chaudoir (back of car, center), Dorothy Kesterke (back of car, in background), and Andrews University President Richard Hammill. Float was probably intended to help create support for the restoration of the courthouse.

From BCHA Events
Sunday Afternoon Series, Thursdays at Courthouse Square, Fourth of July

Volunteers greeted, led activities, served ice cream and more during the Old Fashion 4th of July Celebration.

Tom Kimmel meets and greets with attendees to his presentation.

Chuck Jager gave a fantastic recap of his bicycle journey across Michigan on the old Territorial road

Wanted: Volunteers

BCYF Booth - August 12-17 Every year BCHA joins in the fun and has a booth in the commercial area of the Berrien County Youth Fair. This booth is manned by volunteers and staff alike in three hours shifts. By volunteering to help at BCYF, you have the opportunity to directly grow our BCHA community and will receive one complimentary entrance ticket -- getting you that much closer to the corn dog stand and tractor pull.

Mark Your Calendar: BCHA

A group of WWII POWs wash up on the Teichman farm where they were placed. Dr. Greg Sumner will present "Michigan POW Camps of WWII" on July 18 at the Berrien Springs Community Library.

Now through July 27 - BCHA Presents: World War I
A World War I exhibition no won display on the main level of the Sheriff's Residence. The exhibition experience includes items from the History Center's colelctions, a booklet developed by the History Center staff, and six panels on loan from the Gilder Lehrmann Institute of American History about US involvement in WWI. The exhibition will remain on display through the end of July and is free to the public.

July 18, *Thursdays at Courthouse Square: Michigan POW Camps of WWII with Greg Sumner,* *6:30 p.m.*
Greg Sumner returns to the History Center for a repeat of the Annual Meeting program. This program will be held in the Berrien Springs Community Library. *Free Admission.*

July 21, *Walter Morrow Nelson with Carrie Sharlow,* *2:30 p.m.*
Learn about Walter Nelson, a lawyer of southwest Michigan who was known as “the lawyer in the House of David case.” Carrie Sharlow will break down the contributions Nelson made to the law community in this presentation based on her article in the Michigan Bar Journal. *Free Admission*

July 25, *Thursdays at Courthouse Square: Fort St. Joseph Revealed with Michael Nassaney,* *6:30 p.m.*
Michael Nassaney’s presentation is based on his newly released book of the same title telling what the last 20 years of archaeology at Fort St. Joseph have revealed about one of the most important French fur trading posts in the western Great Lakes Region. *Free Admission*

July 28, *Christmas in July with Marianne Kordas,* *2:30 pm.*
Missing Christmas and Snow? Marianne Kordas, joined by a

Michael Nassaney will present on his 20 years excavating at Fort St. Joseph on Thursday, July 25 at 6:30 pm.

chorus of talented singers, will provide a concert of Medieval and Renaissance songs that will get you in the holiday spirit. *Free Admission.*

August 4, *Nature's Nuggets: Berrien County Natural History with Chuck Nelson and Dick Schinkel,* *2:30 p.m.*
Chuck Nelson, former director of Sarett Nature Center, and Dick Schinkel, a Berrien County enthusiast, will present various tales from their new book "Nature's Nuggets" where they share some of their hilarious and memorable adventures they had over the years. They will have books available for purchase and to sign after their presentation. *Free Admission*

August 12-17, *Berrien County Youth Fair*
While chowing down on a corn dog and some cotton candy, visit the History Center's booth in the commercial building during the Berrien County Youth Fair. *Volunteers needed to help monitor the booth. Call 269-471-1202 to sign up! Admission prices vary.*

Mark Your Calendar: Community Events

Wednesdays, *Brown Bag Concert Series* *12 - 1 pm*
Enjoy free concerts Wednesdays at noon at the John E. N. Howard Bandshell in St. Joseph. Bring your lunch and take a break from the daily grind. Sponsored by Holt Bosse.

Fridays, *Friday Night Concert Series,* *7:30 pm - 8:30 pm*
Enjoy free concerts Friday nights at 7:30 p.m. at the John E. N. Howard Bandshell in St. Joseph. Groove to the blues, jazz, and more!

Saturdays, *St. Joseph Farmer's Market* *9 am - 2 pm ,* Whether you're looking for fresh flowers or fresh veggies you can find it all on a Saturday morning at the Farmer's Market on the bluff in St. Joseph.

July 19 - August 24, *Series 5 Art Exhibition*
The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad Street, St. Joseph, MI
The Box Factory for the Arts is pleased to announce the next Art Exhibition - Series 5, featuring the artwork of Susan Teague, Erica Roberts, Turtel Onli, Marcy Mitchell, and Jennifer Zona. Opening Reception is Friday, July 19 at 5:30 pm.

July 19, *Mike Yore Memorial Car Show,* *4 pm - 9 pm*
Groove to classic tunes and view the classic cars from days gone by as they line up along Lake Boulevard, St. Joseph. The show starts at 4 pm. Sponsored by Honor Credit Union and the Paul & Rose Suchovsky Charitable Trust.

July 20, *Race for YMCA 5k/10k,* *8:30 am*
Margaret B. Upton Arboretum, St. Joseph, $20/ person for pre-registration, $25/person for day-of registration
Race for YMCA 5k/10k offers one of the most scenic courses in southwest Michigan. Participants will enjoy the view along the St. Joseph River, Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, and Lions Park Beach. Proceeds go to support the Benton Harbor-St. Joseph YMCA's Annual Campaign.

July 20, *A Patriotic Celebration,* *10 am - 2 pm*
Morton House Museum, 501 Territorial Road, Benton Harbor
Join the Morton House Museum afor a Patriotic Celebration for local vets on the lawn of the museum. The event is free and the Morton House will be open for tours ($5).

July 26 & 27, *West Side Story,* *Gates open at 6:30; Performances at 7:30 pm*
Shadowland PAvilion, Silver Beach County Park. Rain Location: The Mendel Center Mainstage

Revisit this modern day version of Romeo and Juliet right on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan!

July 27, *Golf Outing to Support Autumn House Adult Day Services,* *8 am - 5 pm*
Heritage Glen Golf Club, 29795 Heritage Lane, Paw Paw, MI
Shotgun Start 9 am. Team of Four: $300; Individual: $75
Join the Heritage Glen Golf Club for the inaugural Autumn House Golf Outing. For more information visit www.TheAvenu.ng/GolfOuting.

Through July 28, *Pete Souza: Two Presidents, One Photographer,* *Krasl Art Center,* The iconic photographs of Pete Souza are well known from his tenure as Chief Official White House Photographer for President Obama. What most people do not remember is that Souza was also an Official White House Photographer for President Reagan.

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BCHA Mission Statement
The Mission of the BCHA is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs for public benefit.